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"WE WILL ACCEPT ONLY A CONSECRATED WORLD"

by William Henry Chamberlin

This and similar phrases of the late Franklin D. Roosevelt were the stock-in-trade of the hot-gospellers who promoted America's intervention in the Second World War. The particular assertion that "we will accept only a world consecrated to freedom from want and freedom from terrorism" was made on May 27, 1941. But the same note was struck in countless other pre-war "fireside chats".

It helped to produce a state of mind which, in the Administration's judgment, warranted the inauguration of a shooting war against German submarines in the Atlantic months before the Japanese militarists lashed out in their greatest national blunder at Pearl Harbor. Sometimes stronger meat was served. Some hysterical persons were led to believe that the Nazi military machine, which never solved the problem of crossing the Channel and invading England, could somehow frogleap the Atlantic and overwhelm the United States.

President Roosevelt contributed rather more than his mite to this hysteria. In this same radio address of May 27, 1941, he asserted:

> "Your Government knows what terms Hitler, if victorious, would impose. . . . I am not speculating about all this. . . . They plan to treat the Latin American nations as they are now treating the Balkans. They plan then to strangle the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada."

No specific evidence to back up this statement emerged, even after the Nazi archives had been seized and fully exploited to make out the blackest possible case for the prosecution at the Nuremberg trial.

But lurid pictures of Storm Troopers parading on Broadway did not influence as many minds as "we can't live in a totalitarian world". This was more rational, and it rested on the highly probable assumption that neither Nazi Germany nor militarist Japan would be a good neighbor.

It could be very plausibly maintained that a Germany dominant in Europe, a Japan dominant over a great part of Asia, would impose great and unpleasant changes in the American way of life. We should have to assume a permanent heavy burden of armaments. We should have to be alert for subversive agents. Our trade would be regimented and strait-

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jacketed. We should be exposed to moral corruption and erosion of our liberal ideals because of the contagious effect of totalitarianism.

There was weight in these arguments. If this evil and threat known as totalitarianism had been localized in Germany and Japan, the case for conscious American intervention in the second world conflict, even before direct attack, would have been much stronger.

II

But the issue was not so simple. There was an older and in many respects a more dangerous center of totalitarian infection than either Germany or Japan. This was the Soviet Union.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Hitler and Mussolini had certainly paid many compliments to Lenin and Stalin. The political structure of the Communist and Fascist States was virtually identical. In both there was the supposedly infallible leader, assisted by a small circle of favorite advisers and ruling with the aid of a tightly disciplined, single party. In both there was a complete absence of any check on the executive power, of any safeguard for the individual against the arbitrary tyranny of the State.

For Stalin, as for Hitler and Mussolini, the formula of governing could be summed up in the phrase: unlimited propaganda plus unlimited terrorism. Soviet Russia, quite as much as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, lived in a chronic atmosphere of bellicose suspicion, directed against the world outside its borders. The Soviet dictator, like his Nazi and Fascist associates, despised Western democracy as decadent and lost no opportunity to excoriate free speech, free press, free economic enterprise, as capitalist devices of deception and exploitation.

More than that, Soviet Communism had its definite blueprint for world conquest through revolution, an open conspiracy announced through the writings of Lenin and Stalin and in resolutions of the Comintern drawn by the men who controlled the resources of the vast Soviet Union.

Failure to estimate realistically the role which Soviet Russia might be expected to play in a smashed and ruined world, with Russia the sole remaining major military power in the adjacent continents of Europe and Asia, was the cardinal blunder of our official and unofficial interventionists. Those of them who secretly sympathized with the Communist, as opposed to the Fascist brand of totalitarianism, were acting logically. Those who did not were guilty of a colossal error in judgment and perspective; an almost unpardonable error in view of the importance of the issues at stake.

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III

To prepare a "consecrated world" by helping an utterly atheistic Power to achieve a position of unique strategic strength, would seem a contradiction in terms. Yet this is just what the foreign policy of the Roosevelt Administration has done. There were critics of this policy. Senator Taft, in the summer of 1941, told a radio network audience that "the victory of Communism in the world would be far more dangerous to the United States than the victory of Fascism".

Neutrals often see the true course and probable consequences of a war more clearly than belligerents. Some ominously prophetic passages may be cited from a memorandum which Count Jordana, Spanish Foreign Minister, submitted to the British Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare, early in 1943, shortly after Roosevelt had committed the American and British Governments to the "unconditional surrender" formula:

> "Which is the greater danger not only for the Continent, but for England herself? A Germany not totally defeated and with sufficient strength to serve as a rampart against Communism, a Germany hated by all her neighbors, which would deprive her of authority although she remained intact, or a Sovietized Germany which would certainly furnish Russia with the added strength of her war preparations, her engineers, her specialized workmen and technicians, which would enable Russia to extend herself with an empire without precedent from the Atlantic to the Pacific? . . . And we ask a second question: is there anyone in the centre of Europe, in that mosaic of countries without consistency or unity, bled moreover by war and foreign domination, who could contain the ambitions of Stalin? There is certainly none."

But such cool reasoning found little hearing in Washington or in London. The Quixotic crusade went on to the bitter end.

After Pearl Harbor and the German declaration of war the United States possessed a stake in the success of the Red Army, although this consideration emphatically did not justify the policy of one-sided appeasement followed by the Western Powers at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam.

But there was certainly no moral or political obligation for the United States to run interference for Stalin's dictatorship before we became irrevocably committed to war. Indeed by far the most hopeful prospect of ending the totalitarian threat would have been for the Western Powers to stand aloof in a struggle between Stalin and Hitler.

Advocates of such a common-sense policy were vilified as appeasers, Fascist sympathizers and whatnot. With an optimism at once amazing and fantastic the men responsible for the conduct of our foreign policy proceeded on the assumption that the Soviet Union would be a co-operative do-gooder in a post-war world purged of totalitarianism.

IV

A bitter and penetrating critic of American participation in World War I, Randolph Bourne, once observed that war is like a wild elephant. It carries the rider where it wants to go, not where he wants to go.

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Our crusade against the specter of the totalitarian world assumed strange forms and bore strange fruits. There was even a strenuous effort to maintain that the Soviet Union was not a totalitarian State at all, but just a slightly different brand of democracy.

Our movies turned out preposterous soothing syrup films like "Mission to Moscow", "Northern Star", "Song of Russia", all designed to depict Russia as an idyllic land of harmonious work, happiness and plenty. Indigenous Communists infiltrated heavily into government agencies, especially those dealing with information and propaganda.

One country after another was handed to Stalin on a silver platter. Western-oriented Poles, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians who believed in American ideals were let down and betrayed. In order to induce the Soviet Union to join the United Nations we conceded to the Soviet Government the means of wrecking that organization, for all practical purposes, by arbitrary and indiscriminate use of the veto.

Now the chips are down. America's second crusade has ended. We cannot even achieve a peace treaty to write "finis" to the disaster. And the empty bluster about refusing to temporize with terrorism stands revealed in all its tragic futility. For what kind of world are we living in today? What are the positive fruits of our crusade?

What about security? Would anyone except an absolute pacifist suggest disarming to the level deemed safe after the First World War?

Secret agents of foreign Powers? Hitler's are out of the picture. But many of our cherished institutions and ways of thought are being reshaped, and necessarily reshaped, because of the cold war that has been launched against us from Moscow, with its accompaniment of world-wide Communist espionage and propaganda.

Moral corruption? Wilson at least put up a fight for his Fourteen Points. But Roosevelt surrendered the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms without a peep of protest. And did we ever fall so low morally as when we accepted the Morgenthau pattern for the treatment of Germany and acquiesced in mass deportations seldom equalled in brutality?

Free trade? How much free trade is there in the world today. Justice for oppressed peoples? Every day's news dispatches from Eastern Europe show how conspicuously that ideal was not realized. Integrity and sovereignty of China? These are just a few of the questions.

The totalitarianism we fought has indeed been destroyed. But a new totalitarianism, more dangerous because of its wider propaganda appeal, has risen in its place. The danger may pass. But the fraud that we accepted will stain the pages of American history for all time.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 51

By Frank C. Hanighen December 17, 1947

Senator H. Alexander Smith (N.J.) on December 15 introduced a resolution for aid to the Republic of Finland. Finland alone of all the countries which owed money to the United States after World War I has never defaulted in the payment of its obligations. As a matter of fact, on December 11, the Finnish Government paid another installment on this debt in the amount of over $260,000. It did this despite the crushing burden of its reparations payments to Soviet Russia. As Senator Smith said: "The heroic people of little Finland have repeatedly demonstrated that they place integrity above comfort or convenience."

Accordingly, the Senator proposes that further payments by the Republic of Finland on its World War I debt should be set aside in a special fund to be used for the education of Finnish youth in the United States to fit them for assisting in the reconstruction of their country. American educational institutions and industrial plants are equipped to furnish the technological training now so vital to Finland's economic recovery. The trainees would come from the ranks of students and specialists in the fields of industry, agriculture, forestry and commerce. The need is acute. Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, who made a survey of small industry in Finland for the American Friends Service Committee in the summer of 1947, reported: "Most of the new industrialists are without knowledge of modern business methods. The result is a wasteful use of manpower and materials. . . . " Many of the small Finnish industries have recently come into being in the effort to fill the vacuum created by the destruction of German industries.

There are two important precedents for Senator Smith's bill. After the suppression of the Boxer uprising in China, the United States was awarded $25,000,000 for claims of American nationals. About $10,000,000 of this sum was remitted by the United States and placed in a trust fund for education of Chinese youths in China and the United States. Similarly, in 1920 Herbert Hoover created the Belgian-American Educational Foundation out of funds derived from the liquidation of Belgian relief supplies. This Foundation, in its first 25 years, arranged for the exchange of more than seven hundred individual students.

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At last week's Gridiron Club show, a character representing Governor Dewey was asked: "What's the matter with your golden baritone, Governor?" The reply was, "I'm saving it for next year. Until then, you're not going to hear anything from me but a whisper." And this served as a musical cue to "Whispering won't make people fear me". In the lobbies following the show, however, it was pointed out that while "whispering" saved Dewey from much criticism in the press, it hardly rendered him popular with the GOP Congressional wheel horses. The latter have not been able to confine themselves to whispering during the past year. Republican Members of Congress have had to stand up and be counted on various public issues -- and sometimes it hurt. It has not increased their love of Dewey that he has been able to dodge the political liabilities which they have chosen to incur.

The current drop in Dewey's boom is in part attributed to such recriminatory feelings in the hierarchy of his party. It is now taken for granted that Dewey has lost considerably in New England. Dopesters estimate that the New York Governor can count on only a maximum of 23 delegates from that area, earlier regarded as a special Dewey preserve. Stassen has made gains there at Dewey's expense and his boosters claim they have 30 New England delegates. Saltonstall, favorite son of

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the Bay State, is said to be assured of that state's 35. But it is felt that on the second ballot next June, Mr. Dewey cannot count on receiving the gift of Saltonstall's delegates. Finally, Eisenhower's backers say they have picked up 4 delegates from Maine and Vermont.

With the decline of Dewey, the hopes of Stassen and Taft are on the rise. At a dinner the other night in Washington, a lady said to the latter, "Oh, Senator, I'm hoping against hope you get it". And Mr. Taft replied, "I don't know why you say 'hoping against hope'. I think it's a certainty". Taft's own confidence is reflected on the shining faces of his followers, whose claims of victory have never been higher in the past year. Impartial observers now believe that, Ohio and New York apart, the gap hitherto existing between Dewey's strength and that of Taft is fast closing.

The Dewey slump is the occasion for much study. Newspaper reports say that Dewey's friends will not disclose their full hand on the first ballot at the Convention. They reportedly believe it better to start with 300 and rise, than to start with 450 and shrink. Indeed, men who have correctly gauged similar situations in previous election years now express the opinion that Governor Dewey's stalwarts could not enlist that boasted 450 for the first ballot, and probably could not get even as many as 350. It remains to be seen, in view of this situation, whether the New York Governor will change his tune from the too clever "Whispering" to more forthright stanzas.

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General Eisenhower in his possibly aprocryphal remarks at a Washington dinner party last week was reported to have complained of the profits of industry and to have recommended that business men forego profits for two years to combat inflation. It may interest the General to know that corporate profits in the past two years have not been excessive. He need not take the word of the NAM for it. In no less a journal than the Socialist New Leader (November 29), Mr. Wladimir Woytinsky, chief economist for the Social Security Board, says so: "Since the national income increased from $70,000,000,000 in 1936-39 to $180,000,000,000 in 1945-46, the share of the corporation profits in the total declined from 5.7 per cent in 1936-39 to 4.5 per cent in 1945-46. In the first half of 1947, corporate profits ran at an annual rate of $17,400,000,000, but this amount includes $5,400,000,000 for re-evaluation of inventories. Net profits were close to $12,000,000,000, or slightly over 6 per cent of national income. The story of exorbitant business profits is just a popular fairy tale -- good for public meetings, where neither speaker nor listeners care whether a story is true or false, but utterly inadequate for a serious economic discussion."

Mr. Woytinsky goes on to pay the following tribute to business: "The truth is that the businessmen have handled their affairs with shrewdness, caution, and farsightedness which contrasted strikingly with the abysmal naivete of the advice given to them by some well-intentioned 'pessimists'. The most important reforms of the New Deal remain in force and are beyond attack. The housing boom, far from collapsing, is just now gaining momentum. The present price increases are very different from the developments after the First World War and much less explosive. Agricultural prices are now higher, but those of manufactured goods lower than they were on the eve of the primary post-war depression in 1920, and this difference is of tremendous importance for the economic outlook. Prices for manufactured goods cannot drop as steeply as in 1920, while a fall of agricultural prices to the parity level will be cushioned by the reserves accumulated by farmers and will not lead to economic collapse of agriculture."

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Mr. Woytinsky has been "optimistic" about business conditions ever since V-J Day, thereby confounding many of his colleagues in the Administration. Apparently, he still maintains this sanguine attitude. But it is necessary to report that other economic observers, with similarly good records as prophets, are now beginning to hedge on business prospects.

The discussion in Washington as to means of stemming the inflationary tide has a somewhat different emphasis behind the scenes than it has in the open on Capitol Hill. Price controls, export controls, etc. are the widely publicized points of controversy. The off-the-record arguments, on the other hand, are concerned with the necessity and practicability of proposed bank credit controls. Economic advisers of the Administration want such controls in varying degrees; political advisers oppose them. But meanwhile some wonder if even partial bank credit tightening will not start a train of deflation, difficult to stop once started. It is recalled that similar measures touched off the deflations of 1920 and 1937-38.

Such possible consequences of credit controls have prompted one economic research organization (occasionally quoted in this column in the past two years) to adopt an attitude of reserve within the past month. Additionally, this organization expresses some concern about the size of business inventories. These inventories were $26.4 billion in 1946, $35 billion the first of 1947, $40 billion in September of this year. While not high in relation to the current volume of business, it is nevertheless admitted that there is a tremendous dollar risk in this $40 billion. And it is concluded that, in view of recent upward trends, present boom conditions are developing elements of real potential risk.

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On December 14, President Truman issued a public warning that the United States would take "appropriate measures" if Italy's freedom were threatened. It is a little known fact that some "appropriate measures" had already been initiated before the Truman statement. For over a week, the U. S. Government had been very worried about the condition of Italy, wracked by Communist-led strikes and disorders. Some days before the Truman utterance, the Government ordered the assembling of a large quantity of arms -- small arms and machine-guns -- and ammunition to be flown to Italy for the Italian Army. No official statement on this action has been made public, and indeed it has not been ascertained whether the arms have been sent. But the order is significant of the state of alarm over Italy.

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The American press correctly discounted in advance the breakup of the Big Four London Conference. But few commentators have made any mention of the effect on Germany of the furious propaganda duel carried on by Molotov on one side and Marshall, Bevin and Bidault on the other. It was early reported that the Russian Foreign Minister was energetically seeking to curry favor among the Germans and to picture the Western Powers as the "oppressors" of Germany; and at least some of Marshall's retorts were interpreted as efforts to undermine Molotov's propaganda. The Conference closed with no reference by American commentators as to who won the battle.

The Swiss press seems to think that Molotov won. According to the Swiss Press Review on the Berne radio, December 11, Die Tat (Swiss newspaper) felt "that Molotov has succeeded in gaining for himself the strongest position of all the Conference partners, at least in the eyes of the Germans, and that the Western Powers are today reduced to a position of defense, at least where the problem of Germany is concerned. The Gazette de Lausanne is of the same opinion. This paper is convinced that regardless of what will be the outcome of the present negotiations in London, a large part of Germany will always see in Mr. Molotov its only friend and advocate."

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Book Events

The James Family: Including Selections from the Writings of Henry James, Sr., William, Henry and Alice James, by F. O. Matthiessen. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $6.75. . . . The Notebooks of Henry James, edited by F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock. New York: The Oxford University Press. $6.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

In the preparation of these volumes, as in an earlier essay in biographical criticism called Henry James: the Major Phase, Professor Matthiessen had the benefit of all the papers which have recently been deposited in the Houghton Library at Harvard. The result in this case is a great amplification of our knowledge of this gifted and eccentric American family, whose influence on the modern mind for good and bad has probably been much greater than the combined influences of the Adams dynasty and of the two Holmes's. There has been, I believe, some criticism of Professor Matthiessen's management of these materials. His method is to provide an interpretive or explanatory nexus between particular documents or portions of documents. He has been accused of suppressing in the interest of his own commentary certain passages which are of legitimate concern to critics and literary scholars. But these are sins which affront only the specialists, and I am inclined to think that to the general reader Mr. Matthiessen's arrangement enhances the value of these books.

There is no doubt that the members of the James family were endowed to an astonishing degree with genius, and little doubt that it was the kind of genius that is not wholly remote from madness. The first of these books tends to confirm an impression that the most brilliant and original of them all was the elder Henry James. His ideas had, to be sure, no great interest for his own generation, which was also, of course, the generation of Emerson, Thoreau, Channing, Wendell Phillips, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman; yet in a sense the genius of the elder James was closer than theirs to the genius of the age, especially in his absolute faith in the limitless potentialities of the human spirit. What appears to have been the naturally introspective and almost mystical bent of his mind was intensified by an accident in childhood which deprived him of his right leg and disqualified him for a life of action. A comfortable fortune, inherited from his father, a New York merchant of Irish Presbyterian origin, left him free to indulge his religious curiosity and his taste for travel. Like Melville, the elder James was obsessed by the problems of evil and redemption, and was profoundly influenced by the theosophical doctrines of Swedenborg, which he somehow combined with the economic theories of Charles Fourier into a kind of spiritualized Socialism, which, however -- though it was the heyday of the Brook Farmers, the Shakers and the Oneida Community -- he made no attempt to put into practice. He was a volumnious writer with a vigorous and passionate style and a considerable gift of epigram. The most remarkable of the several remarkable products of his pen included in Mr. Matthiessen's book is a spirited defense of the conduct of Vice President Andy Johnson, who turned up drunk for his own inauguration. The point of this apologia was that Mr. Johnson, under the inspiration of Hannibal Hamlin's whiskey, had given utterance to an "exquisite truth and profound religious pathos", which in sobriety he would have suppressed out of "carnal prudence".

The Notebooks of the younger Henry James, also from the papers in the Houghton Library, are of the greatest value to critics and literary historians, and of considerable interest to the devotees of his works. They contain the germinal sources and the preliminary planning of many of his best known novels and stories.

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